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May 1, 2004

Dear Colleagues:

Welcome to the May 2004 issue of **Eat Right Montana's Simple Steps for a Healthy Weight**. This month we feature the third pillar of a healthy lifestyle - **variety** - in food intake and physical activity.

Even in today's complex food world, **balance**, **variety**, and **moderation** continue to be the watchwords of good nutrition. In fact, these three concepts are nearly universal in dietary guidelines around the world. Although graphics and individual foods vary from country to country, the recommendation to **eat a variety of foods** is imbedded in nearly all nutrition advice. For interesting links to global dietary guidance, to go www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/etext/000039.html#xtocid2381833

There is another side to variety and eating patterns. Some research suggests that increasing the variety of foods at a meal may actually increase caloric intake. This may be especially true with sweets and highly palatable snack foods. For an excellent review of the literature related to this issue, read **Dietary Variety, Energy Regulation, and Obesity** (Raynor and Epstein, Psychological Bulletin, May 2001, available online @ www.apa.org/journals/bul/bul1273325.html).

As nutrition communicators, our challenge is to help busy families use **variety**, along with **moderation** and **balance**, to maximize nutrition and minimize excess calories. Reaching this goal requires an ingredient missing in the current US Dietary Guidelines - **enjoyment!** Over the next few months, we will focus on this aspect of nutrition, eloquently expressed in a guideline from the German Nutrition Society:

- **Take your time and enjoy eating. Eating consciously helps to eat healthy. Arrange dishes attractively. Take the time for eating. It's fun, makes you aware of the great freedom of choice and promotes the feeling of satiation.**

Thanks for your past and future support of **Eat Right Montana**. Your feedback is always important to us; please let us know what you think.

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**Simple Steps for a Healthy Weight: #5. Enjoy variety every day.
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Healthy Families 2004: Expanding your nutrition horizons (5th in a series of 12)

Are you bored with your eating habits? Does it seem like you eat the same old things meal after meal? Have you ever thought about how many different foods you eat in a day?

“When it comes to nutrition, variety is more than the spice of life,” says Phyllis Dennee, MS, of Montana State University Extension in Bozeman. “Eating a wide variety of foods is an essential step to a long and healthy life. In fact, some experts recommend eating as many as 30 different foods in a day.”

If you’re in a nutrition rut, there are plenty of healthy reasons to expand the variety of foods you eat. Studies show that people with the longest life expectancies, like the Greeks and the Japanese, eat small amounts of many different foods. Of course, they eat many different whole foods (like fish, fruits, vegetables, and legumes), rather than lots of different chips, candy, snacks, and soft drinks.

The best reason to focus on variety, according to Dennee, is to get all the nutrients your body requires for optimal health. “No one food, or food group, has everything you need, like over 40 essential vitamins and minerals, protein, fiber, and a growing list of disease-fighting antioxidants. Scientists have identified over 600 important compounds in the food we eat – and they regularly discover new ones.”

Supplements are no substitute for eating a variety of foods. First, pills only contain a handful of known nutrients. Many nutrients are also better absorbed from food than from supplements. Whole foods have the added benefit of natural nutrient “bundles” – groups of nutrients that come together in food and work together in your body. For example, protein, iron, and zinc for muscles are found in lean beef; protein, calcium, magnesium, and phosphorus for bones come together in dairy foods.

Eat Right Montana, a statewide coalition promoting healthful eating and active lifestyles, urges all Montanans to expand their food horizons. Eating a wider variety of nutrient-rich foods helps prevent cancer, heart disease, and stroke – and it’s a treat for your taste buds at the same time!

“Just for fun, count the foods you eat today,” says Dennee. “If it’s less than 30, add variety with foods that combine several nutrient-rich ingredients together. Enjoy 7-grain toast with peanut butter for breakfast, fruit salad with cottage cheese at lunch, and chicken stir-fry with lots of veggies for dinner.”

ATTACHED: *Eat a Variety of Foods and Do a Variety of Activities*

12 Delicious Ways to Enjoy a Variety of Foods

Food is about much more than nutrients – it's about flavors, colors, textures, and smells.

Eating a variety of foods is the best way to get the nutrients your body craves – and to satisfy your taste buds at the same time. For maximum satisfaction, enjoyment, and nutrition, plan your meals and snacks with variety in mind. Aim for at least 30 different food ingredients a day – even a tiny amount can enhance your nutrient score.

1. Enjoy COLORFUL foods:

Bright green broccoli, bright orange sweet potatoes, and bright yellow squash are three tasty veggie treats.

2. Enjoy CRUNCHY foods:

When it comes to crunchy options, veggies – like carrots, celery, pea pods, and beans – can't be beat.

3. Enjoy CRISP foods:

Produce bins are full of refreshingly, crisp foods – apples, fresh peppers, Romaine lettuce, and raw spinach.

4. Enjoy JUICY foods:

Refresh yourself with juicy plums, peaches, pineapple, nectarines, tangerines, grapefruit, and pears.

5. Enjoy TANGY foods:

Tomatoes are the ultimate tangy ingredient – fresh in a salad, canned in sauce, or sun-dried on a pizza.

6. Enjoy SWEET foods:

Cherries and berries (blueberries, strawberries, or raspberries) provide the perfect sweet ending to a meal.

7. Enjoy MEATY foods:

For hearty protein, choose from beef, pork, lamb, chicken, turkey, salmon, sole, halibut, tuna, or shrimp.

8. Enjoy CHEWY foods:

Breads made from whole grains, like wheat, oats, rye, barley, and spelt are chewy, satisfying, and nutritious.

9. Enjoy NUTTY foods:

Small amounts of nuts and seeds (almonds, cashews, peanuts, flax, or sunflower) add lots of flavor.

10. Enjoy CREAMY foods:

Low-fat dairy foods (milk, yogurt, cheese, and cottage cheese) offer a creamy, calcium-rich texture.

11. Enjoy ZESTY foods:

There's no need to eat a boring meal ever again; add zest with lemon, pepper, basil, oregano, or parsley.

12. Enjoy SPICY foods:

For real zing, start with your favorite herbs and spice it up with garlic, onions, cumin, and chili peppers.



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**Celebrating
Healthy Families
2004**

12 Fun Ways to Add Variety into Your Fitness Plan

Whole body fitness develops when you do a variety of physical activities – to build strength, maintain balance, and expand aerobic capacity. No single activity provides all the movements that your body craves for physical and mental health. The best way to feel great – and to look as good as you feel – is find a variety of physical activities that fit into your daily schedule. Then, just do them as often as you can!

- 1. STRIDE with your feet:**
Get a little extra benefit from every step you take – just add a little extra length into your stride.
- 2. LIFT with weights:**
Strength-building activities, even lifting small weights, can pump up your muscles and lift your spirits.
- 3. JUMP with a rope:**
What a way to get a fun, full-body workout – twirl a rope with your arms and jump with your legs.
- 4. PEDAL with a bike:**
Inside, outside, stationary, on the road, up a trail – wherever you pedal, you'll build strong legs and lungs.
- 5. BALANCE with yoga:**
For thousands of years, people of all ages and all body types have used yoga to balance mind and body.
- 6. STRETCH with a band:**
Use a wide elastic band to stretch out the knots and kinks that can build up to real aches and pains.
- 7. SWING with a partner:**
Dancing is exercise without the effort – just pick your partner and swing your body around the room.
- 8. PADDLE with your arms:**
Swim across a pool or paddle a canoe across a pond – and you'll be on your way to shapely, strong arms.
- 9. PUMP with a machine:**
Pump your arms, pump your legs, pump your abs, pump your buns, and pump your way to fitness and health.
- 10. PUSH with a stroller:**
Push the kids to the park for a swing or to the store for some shopping – good for you and fun for them.
- 11. STEP with the stairs:**
Use the stairs every chance you get; every step you take (up or down) builds beautiful legs and thighs.
- 12. SMILE with your mouth:**
Just like the rest of your body, the muscles in your face feel better (and look better) when they move more.



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**Celebrating
Healthy Families
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HEALTHY FAMILIES 2004

Simple Steps for a Healthy Weight

JANUARY 2004

1. Keep a record.

FEBRUARY 2004

2. Develop a routine.

MARCH 2004

3. Balance food and activity.

APRIL 2004

4. Take a daily dose of moderation.

MAY 2004

5. Enjoy variety every day.

JUNE 2004

6. Take time for health every day – at home.

JULY 2004

7. Take time for health every day – at work.

AUGUST 2004

8. Take time for health every day – on vacation.

SEPTEMBER 2004

9. Take time for health every day – at school.

OCTOBER 2004

10. Take time for health every day – around town.

NOVEMBER 2004

11. Take time for health every day – at organizations.

DECEMBER 2004

12. Celebrate the joy of health every day.



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